

DRAFT

Tiered Approach to Procuring Additional Independent Scientific Advice As the BDCP Planning Process Proceeds

The purpose of this document is to describe the approach being developed by the BDCP Steering Committee to obtaining additional scientific advice to assist it and the SAIC technical team in the development of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan. This is intended to reflect the discussions of the topic to date amongst the members of the Steering Committee, working with and through the science liaisons and the BDCP science facilitators. It is also intended to reflect a living, dynamic and flexible approach to seeking additional independent scientific advice on an efficient and timely basis.

Tier 1 – Tier 1 is the simplest process to seeking outside expert advice. It would consist of fairly rapid and focused responses to particular questions that arise from the deliberations of the Work Groups or Technical Teams on an ad-hoc basis, formulated with the assistance of the SAIC technical support. It would not entail per se any formal meetings or workshops. Rather, the Working Groups or Technical Teams, working with SAIC support, would approach the Facilitation Team with a written statement of the issue or issues and a brief supporting description of the relevance and significance of the issue to the planning effort. The Science Facilitators would help the Working Group or Technical Team to identify the appropriate expert, present the issues to them, and assist in the development and documentation of the response. Tier 1 referrals would typically require a written response but it could be as simple as the Facilitator summarizing a discussion with the appropriate expert(s) after verifying the accuracy of the response with the expert(s).

Tier 2 – Tier 2 represents a middle level of effort and complexity for seeking outside independent scientific advice in support of the planning process. As compared with Tier 1, it would be suitable for somewhat more complex issues, or larger sets of questions, that might best be addressed by a small group of scientists and documented in a short report prepared by the Facilitators, working directly with those experts. A Tier 2 level effort might entail a single convening of a small group of experts for a set period of time (e.g. a half day meeting), and might also entail the participation of representatives of the relevant Work Group or Technical Team, where such participation would enhance the understanding of the purpose and relevance of the topic. A Tier 2 process would typically be guided by a written statement of the topic or issues to be addressed and a brief description of the purpose and importance of the topic for the planning process. Each Tier 2 process would be coordinated with and subject to the prior review of the BDCP science liaisons. Each Tier 2 process would be documented with a brief written report prepared by the Facilitators, with the assistance and concurrence of the participating outside experts

One example is to gather 4-6 terrestrial ecologists to offer scientific advice on the non-aquatic communities and species for which there was insufficient information in the first Independent Science Advisors workshop. This might entail a ½-day or all-day meeting focused just on that particular omission in the ISA recommendations now that there is more information on the conservation strategies, geographic extent of impacts, etc. Decisions regarding Tier 2 topics would mostly likely fall under the requirements for independent science input under the NCCPA, so each would likely need to be assigned to a Lead Advisor. That advisor might be a different individual for each Tier 2 topic, depending on required expertise.

Tier 3 – The Tier 3 process would be reserved for the most complex and powerful topics. The Tier 3 process would entail the convening of a formal workshop to address large, complex issues with a larger group of scientists, potentially including field trips. They might also entail working sessions with representatives of one or more Working Groups or Technical Teams if such would enhance an understanding of the role and relevance of the topic for the BDCP planning process. Tier 3 topics would be developed in consultation with the science liaisons and would entail the prior review and concurrence of the BDCP Steering Committee. One potential example of a Tier 3 topic is the design of an adaptive management and monitoring program for the conservation plan. The identification of the appropriate scientists to involve in a Tier 3 process (including the Lead Scientist) would be decided by the Facilitators in consultation with the Science Liaison Committee. Like Tier 2, Tier 3 processes would result in a written report prepared by the Facilitators in conjunction with and with the concurrence of the outside experts.